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Exotic Newcastle and the Pet Bird

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

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(1-65)
VD-22 New Birds

What is Exotic Newcastle?

- Exotic Newcastle disease is a serious virus disease of birds and poultry, causing death rates of 50 to 95 percent. This special form of Newcastle disease has entered the United States several times in recent years. It is much more severe than the mild type of Newcastle that has existed here for over 35 years. It can be rapidly transmitted from bird to bird and from premises to premises. Outbreaks in California, Florida, New York, Texas, and Virginia have been eradicated at a cost of over \$60 million.



Why is Exotic Newcastle Important to You

- Exotic Newcastle disease outbreaks in pet shops, breeding flocks, and aviaries can result in severe losses to all birds on the premises. Eradication efforts can result in total loss of a flock. Survivors are often weak and uncoordinated. Normal, recently exposed birds may die several weeks after purchase. Some infected birds show no signs of the disease, but remain carriers for many months. This virus has produced minor eye infections in humans who handled sick birds.



Why is Exotic Newcastle Important to Farmers?

- Most pet birds are free of this disease. But illegally imported cage birds may be infected with exotic Newcastle and serve as sources of virus that can spread to domestic poultry and pet birds alike. If commercial poultry were exposed, this disease could produce severe economic losses. In concentrated poultry areas, many millions of birds could be affected.



How Can You Protect Your Pet Birds?

- Request certification from your supplier that his birds are healthy prior to shipment and that they will be shipped in new or thoroughly disinfected containers.

- Maintain records of all sales and shipments to or from your flock.

- ISOLATE all newly purchased birds—no matter where you obtain them—for at least 30 days. Do not traffic between your new and old birds.

- Contact your veterinarian, diagnostic laboratory, or State or Federal animal health official concerning any unusual die-off in pet birds. Put dead birds in plastic bags and refrigerate for submittal to a diagnostic laboratory. The laboratory can find the cause of death and suggest solutions to flock problems.

- Whether you own one bird or hundreds, exotic Newcastle disease can be devastating. If you need more information or help, call:

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MAY 22 1979

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August 1978